



Yards of the Month — 7

The Shaw SPIRIT

Weekend Weather



Saturday
Showers (p.m.)
High 85, Low 68



Sunday
Cloudy/showers
High 84, Low 70

Courtesy of the 20th Operations Support Squadron Weather flight

June 24, 2005

Serving Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., home of the F-16CJ+

Vol. 11, No. 25

Newsline

Commander's calls

Officers' Call

Today at 3 p.m. -- Club Shaw

SNCO Commander's Call

Tuesday at 1 p.m. -- base theater

E-6 and below Commander's Calls

Wednesday at 11 a.m., 2 and 4:30 p.m.
-- base theater

Changes of command

The 682nd Air Support Operations Squadron change of command is today at 9 a.m. in the vehicle bay of the 682nd ASOS. Lt. Col. Seth Bretscher will relinquish command to Lt. Col. Brian Pierson.

The 609th Combat Operations Squadron change of command is Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the conference center. Col. Byron Risner will relinquish command to Lt. Col. Michael Byrne.

Closure

The 20th Medical Group will close today at 2 p.m. for training. For medical emergencies, call 911 or seek care at the nearest emergency room. For non emergencies, call 895-CARE.

Sexual assault policy

The Department of Defense has implemented a new policy regarding sexual assault that reinforces core values and ensures the safety, dignity and well-being of members of the Armed Forces. For more information go to www.sapr.mil or call 895-SARC.

Almost there!

The 20th Fighter Wing is nearing its goal of zero DUIs for 60 days. We have 13 DUI-free days to go until the commander awards a wing down day.

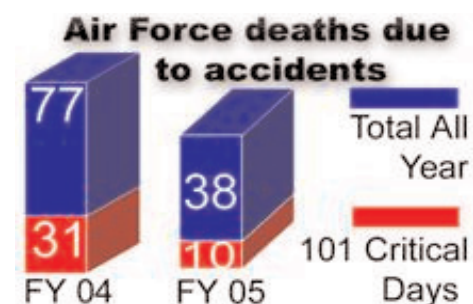
Last DUI: 20th CMS

2005 total: 8

This time last year: 26

Current as of Thursday

Airmen Against Drunk Driving offers free, confidential rides for intoxicated base members. For a ride, call 983-9722. AADD saves last week: 20



(Graphic from 20th Fighter Wing Safety Office)



Photo by Senior Airman Susan Penning

Capt. Gina "Torch" Jennings, 20th Operations Support Squadron assistant chief of wing weapons, flies with the 79th Fighter Squadron. She's currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Women warriors

Air Force combat positions include both genders; female fighters display 'lethal, effective force'

By Senior Airman Susan Penning
Editor

The House Armed Services Committee approved a bill last month which would put into federal law a Pentagon policy from 1994 that prohibits females in the military to serve in units below brigade level whose primary mission is direct ground combat.

Although the policy has raised the eyebrows of supporters of women in combat roles, many may not realize the Air Force confidently assigns women to combat aircraft positions, said Col. Philip Ruhlman, 20th Fighter Wing commander.

"Our women fighter pilots in the Air Force are fully qualified and continue to fly in combat alongside their male counterparts. They do so with lethal and effective force against our adversaries," he added.

Capt. Gina Jennings, currently deployed from the 20th Operations Support Squadron to Southwest Asia, has flown multiple combat sorties. One of her primary duties at her current location is monitoring execution of the Air Tasking Order and all elements of combat sortie generation.

"The training we get as pilots more than prepares us for combat," said Capt. Jennings. "We begin first on the ground through training such as: simulators, academics, intelli-

gence, escape and evasion, chemical warfare, weapons and threats. In the air, we train and fly every day preparing for combat. With the multiple missions of the F-16CJ+, we utilize every sortie to ensure we are ready to execute any mission we are given."

According to current Air Force Personnel Center statistics, Capt. Jennings is one of 76 women flying fighter aircraft for the U.S. Air Force. There are currently 33 female fighter pilots in Air Combat Command.

Maj. Jill Long, assigned to the U.S. Central Command Air Forces Commander's Action Group, is another. She's an A-10 pilot who has seen her share of combat.

Her most recent combat experience was during Operation Enduring Freedom where she said she made sure fighters, bombers and attack aircraft had the necessary air support to ensure the safety of servicemembers on the ground.

On a previous combat mission, she said she provided close air support, non-traditional intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and strike capabilities to the ground commander.

She describes one of the combat missions she participated in.

"We got a request for air support. We were able to redirect assets to the location

but it was a pretty big fight. Having been through several similar situations I knew to always hope for the best, a quick resolution, but plan for the worst, a long-term, full-up battle. The weather was very poor so we were extremely limited in what was flying. Through coordination and teamwork with (everyone involved), we were able to make it all work."

The male pilots who fly beside women like Maj. Long and Capt. Jennings get a first-hand look at what they bring to the fight.

"Women are an integral part of our air and space team. I have witnessed their excellence in combat and their leadership impact on our total force," said Maj. Anthony Roberson, 20th Operations Support Squadron director of operations. "Capt. Jennings, is dictating the pace of combat as we speak. We were asked to put our best foot forward in support of OIF and we did that by sending 'Torch' Jennings."

Maj. Long's perspective on women in combat supports Maj. Roberson's 'team' concept.

"There is a mission to be accomplished and we are all expected to make that happen ... regardless of our (gender)," she said. "The fact that I'm a female doesn't make me special. A bullet, bomb or missile has no clue what gender is employing it."

Local VA patients include Airmen

By Staff Sgt. Alicia Prakash
20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

We often pay patronage to veterans of Vietnam and Desert Storm, but few people realize Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom are still ongoing and they have brought veteran war heroes right to the local community.

The WJB Dorn Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Columbia is currently treating veterans who served in OIF and OEF. Some of those veterans are Airmen.

"We don't distinguish one branch from the other when we treat patients," said Faela Maney, OIF/OEF case worker at the VA hospital.

She said they focus on taking care of the injured veterans. While there are inpatients at the VA hospital, outpatients are among the numbers.

Shanika Johnson, an Air Force veteran, receives outpatient care at the VA hospital for back problems.

Ms. Johnson was deployed to Southwest Asia from January to April 2003.

"I was nervous and excited," she said. "[Thinking of] getting back to my family is what helped me make it through."

When Johnson returned from the war, she separated from the Air Force and now resides in her hometown of Columbia.

She has a young son and said she is teaching him not to take his freedom or security for granted.

To those preparing to deploy overseas, Ms. Johnson offers advice to Airmen.

"Think about the field environment. It's a war-time environment. Keep that in mind and be alert," she said.

Since serving in the war, Ms. Johnson's mindset about America has changed. Patriotic holidays aren't just days off; they're significant now.

"I feel proud I've helped my nation," she said.

Ms. Johnson also wants other Americans to become conscious of the realities of war.

"We're making big sacrifices. We have to leave our families behind and risk our lives," she said.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Amber McCarthy

Mirrored admiration

Mr. Thereyaro Presley (left) speaks with Master Sgt. Tony Young, 609th Combat Operations Squadron, at the Sumter Veterans Clinic Monday. Volunteers from Shaw spent the day serving refreshments to the veterans at the clinic and sharing military stories.



Photo by Tarsha Storey

Busted!

The speed limit when driving by Carolina Lakes Golf Course is 15 mph. Team Shaw members are urged to use caution particularly at the sharp turn in front of the club house.

Fireworks: safety first for Shaw

By Tarsha Storey
Correspondant

The Fourth of July means fireworks for many Americans. Although they're part of the celebration, they can be hazardous and Team Shaw members are encouraged to enjoy the fireworks season safely.

Because fireworks can be dangerous, they must be handled with care, said Stanley Bridges, 20th Civil Engineer Squadron fire inspector. Mr. Bridges recommends that adults read and observe all safety precautions.

"When you light fireworks, don't lean directly over them. They may explode and injure you," said Shawn Sullivan, 20th CES fire inspector.

The 20th CES Fire Department recommends all Team Shaw members who live off base and plan to use fireworks follow the following tips:

- Children should not handle fireworks unless they are under close adult supervision.

- Alcohol and fireworks should never be used together.

- Fireworks should only be lit on a hard surface in a clear, open area.

- Fireworks should never be discharged while in someone's hand.

- If fireworks don't go off, they should never be tampered with. They should be left alone for at least five minutes and then immersed in water.

- Wear safety goggles and only light one firework at a time.

- Be aware of surroundings and weather conditions. Wind can carry sparks that may start fires

in dry grass. It can also carry fireworks to spectators and cause injury.

- Fireworks should never be used indoors.

- Always have a fire extinguisher, water supply, hose or bucket of water nearby for emergencies. One person should always be ready with water to extinguish any fires that may start.

- Do not smoke while handling fireworks.

- Use care when transporting or handling fireworks. Do not carry fireworks in your pocket or on your person. Never aim, point or throw fireworks at any person or at any property.

- Do not bring fireworks or pets to a professional fireworks display.

- Never make your own or modify fireworks. Buy all your fireworks from a reputable dealer to ensure their quality and safety.

Because of an increased fireworks safety enforcement rate in the United States, fireworks injuries have declined by 70 percent in the last 10 years. One-third of fireworks injuries per year are caused by illegal and homemade fireworks, according to the National Council on Fireworks Safety.

"Fireworks are not permitted on Shaw, even in housing. The safest way to enjoy them is to see a professional display. You can get more bang for your buck," said Mr. Bridges.

Team Shaw members can enjoy a Fourth of July celebration of fireworks, music, food, games and rides at the 20th Services Squadron's 'Jammin' Fourth of July celebration from 3 to 10 p.m. at Dillon Park in Sumter. For more information, call the 20th SVS Marketing Office at 895-4897.

Briefly ...

Promotion ceremony

A 20th Fighter Wing promotion ceremony will be held Thursday at 3 p.m. at Club Shaw.

Club Shaw on the move

The 20th Services Squadron's Club Shaw is moving to the conference center and will re-open in mid-July. The bar, barber shop and the Information, Tickets and Travel office will remain in the current facility. As a result of the move, the Monday through Friday lunch buffet for all ranks will return and a new all-ranks Friday night buffet will be added. Bingo and all other entertainment programs will be conducted in the conference center. The move will allow the club to use the larger and more attractive facility, and save money and manpower.

The club will re-open under a new name. Those who have suggestions for one can call **666-3651**.

Disposition of effects

Any persons having claims against the estate of Airman 1st Class Justin Morrow, 55th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, should call 1st Lt. Brian Wear at **895-5279** or **499-1791**.

DFAS delay

Due to a system changeover, Thursday and July 1 will be non-business processing days for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. All travel vouchers that were turned in this week after Thursday will be paid no earlier than July 5. Military pay will not be affected. For more information, call **895-1537/1548**.

Employment options

Are you planning to separate or retire from military service in the near future? Do you know how to go about looking for employment opportunities? The NCO Association's Veterans Employment Assistance manages two programs, the National Job Fair and Job Board. More information is available at **www.MilitaryJobWorld.com**. There are no rank restrictions, membership requirements or fees charged to the veterans or civilian job seekers. VEA is not an employment or staffing agency.

Financial tip

Spending leaks

Impulse buying -- frittering away small amounts here and there on "little" things -- can add up to a surprisingly big amount. Write down every penny you spend for a week and take a hard look at your spending "leaks." Then try to control these trouble spots. Use an allowance to keep within your budget. Once you can resist the temptation of spending "small" amounts, you'll have more money for the things you really want.

For more information call the Family Support Center at **895-1252**.



Photo by David Poythress

CE 'foam' home

The 20th Civil Engineer Squadron Fire Department tests a new fire suppression system in Hangar 1200 recently. When the system is activated, 12 feet of foam will cover the hangar within about two minutes.

Do you use the Internet for medical prescriptions?

MDG urges caution, offers alternative

Internet Physician and Pharmacy Services is just what it sounds like; using the Internet to receive medical care and/or prescription medications. Although these services are easily accessible, they can be very dangerous and even illegal to use. The majority of Internet pharmacy services are not regulated or monitored and do not meet the standards that other pharmacies are required to meet.

There are approximately 15 Web-based pharmacy sites that are certified by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy as Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites. In order to gain certification, these sites must comply with the licensing and inspection requirements of their state and each state in which they

dispense medications. In addition, these pharmacies have demonstrated to NABP compliance with VIPPS criteria including patient rights to privacy, authentication and security of prescription orders, adherence to a recognized quality assurance policy, and provision of meaningful consultation between patients and pharmacists. Thus, Internet pharmacies with the VIPPS seal will safely and appropriately dispense medications to their patients.

Another viable option for utilizing online services is through the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy program. TMOP allows active duty personnel to have their medications mailed directly to their home at no cost. Other TRICARE beneficiaries can use TMOP as well but may have to pay a co-pay for their prescriptions. Once registered for TMOP, a patient can order refills online and check the status of their orders online.

More information about TMOP can be found at the following Web site: **<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/default.cfm>**.

There is no guarantee that non-VIPPS pharmacies are operating safely or legally and receiving medical treatment from them is dangerous. These pharmacies often dispense medications without performing necessary medical screenings. The result could be serious harm or injury to you. Also, knowingly and intentionally obtaining and/or using narcotics and other controlled substances without a doctor's express order is illegal and may result in disciplinary action.

Be smart, be safe and only take medications after you have had a visit with your doctor. If you have any questions, please contact the 20th Medical Group Pharmacy at **895-6464**. (Information from 20th MDG)

Shaw Blotter

(Editor's note: The blotter includes incidents from the 20th Security Forces Squadron reports. The following information is intended to increase awareness of resource protection and safety concerns.)

■ An Airman was apprehended and turned over to local authorities for an off base sexual assault.

■ Security forces responded to five incidents/accidents involving POVs and GOVs.

■ There were 18 traffic tickets issued during the week.

In case of emergency, call **911**.

Direct routine questions and non-emergency concerns to 20th SFS per-

sonnel at the 24-hour desk by calling **895-3670**.

If you have information about any crime, listed here or otherwise, call the 20th Security Forces Investigations section at **895-3600**.



For the record: Rudi Williams, American Forces Press Service, authored last week's Around the Air Force article titled "Volunteers fly 'greatest generation' to see memorial."

SPiRiT TRIVIA

Question: Since the United States began to more strictly enforce fireworks safety, by what percentage have fireworks injuries declined?

Answer to last week's question: Military victims of sexual assault now have the option of restrictive (completely confidential) reporting through the sexual assault response coordinator at **895-SARC**.

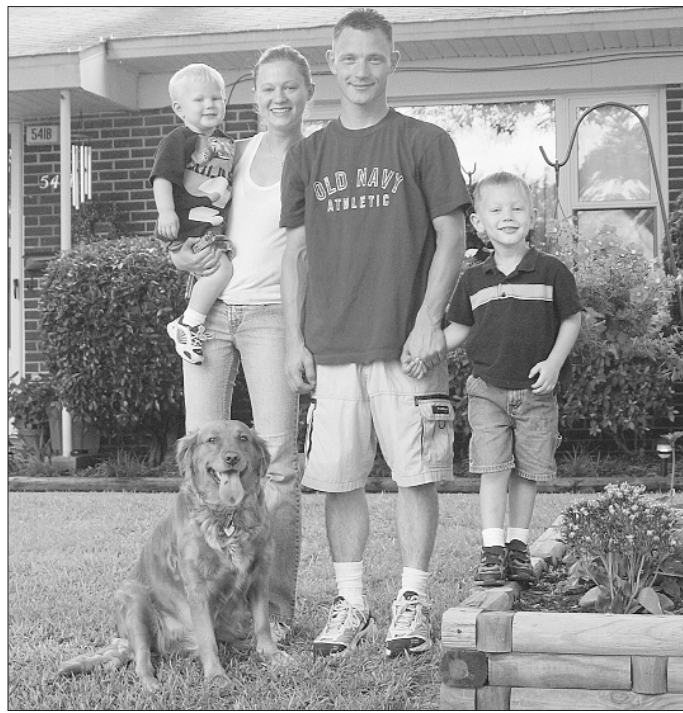
Last week's winner: 2nd Lt. Doug Hickey, 20th Services Squadron

The first person to e-mail the correct answer to *The Shaw Spirit* at **spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil** will receive a free t-shirt.

June Yard of the Month winners



Nicole and Andrew, wife and son of Staff Sgt. Chad Olexa, 682nd Air Support Operations Squadron, work on the flower beds in their Shaw Manor yard.



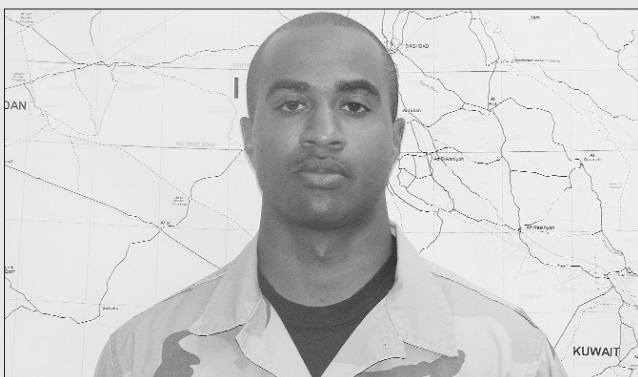
Photos by Staff Sgt. Josef Cole

Robyn and Senior Airman Edgar Lewis, 20th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and their sons, Dylan (right) and Jason, and dog, Roxie, reside in the Shaw Heights area.



Kim and Tech. Sgt. Thomas Wright Jr., 20th Logistics Readiness Squadron, live in the Palmetto Heights neighborhood. Every Yard of the Month winner receives a prize from the 20th Civil Engineer Squadron Housing Office.

Diamond Excellence Award Winner



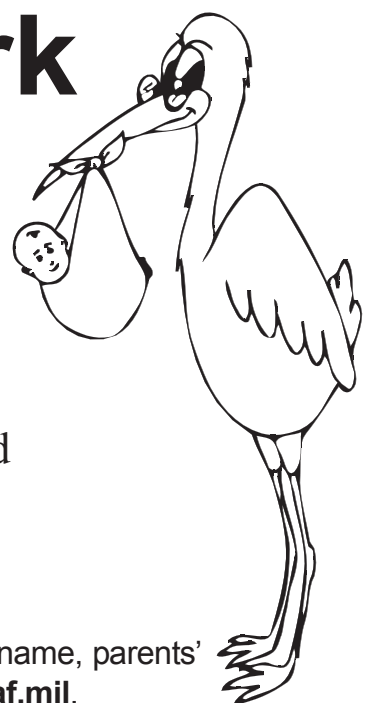
Airman 1st Class Eric White
609th Air Communications Squadron

Shaw's Stork Sorties

June 8 - Jacob Preston to Angela and Tech Sgt. Timothy Adams, 20th Equipment Maintenance Squadron

June 14 - Jaden Patrick to Sheena and Staff Sgt. Roy McGuire II, 20th Maintenance Group

To announce your child's birth, send the baby's name, parents' names and date of birth to spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil.



My husband is a drug addict

By Staff Sgt. Lindsay Thomas
22nd Contracting Squadron

MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE, Kan. -- I've said those words many times, yet the sound of them still make me cringe. I still wonder how any of this could have happened; I ponder how everything could have spun so horribly out of control.

About a year ago, I was pulled out of Airman Leadership School by an Office of Special Investigations agent who informed me that my husband had failed a urinalysis for cocaine. Shocked, I stumbled back to class distracted by news that seemed impossible.

My husband even swore to me that it was impossible. He pleaded his innocence, giving me some elaborate story about a trip to the emergency room for kidney stones and a morphine drip that caused him to test positive for cocaine. I believed him. Why wouldn't I? There were no signs of drug abuse; he didn't match that profile. I never saw drastic mood changes; there was never an issue with money mysteriously disappearing from our bank accounts and I always knew where he was.

As the court-martial grew near, the stress became unbearable. I wasn't sleeping; I couldn't concentrate. To be completely honest, I was a basket case. But there was some glimmer of hope, because I believed in justice. I believed everything would be made right and if I just stuck through it, there would be a light at the end of this long, dark tunnel.

Two weeks before the court-martial, my husband's stories started to contradict one another and he kept back-

tracking on his stories, grasping for some validity. He was slipping up, and it all began to unravel before him.

He said, "I slipped up; I used cocaine." Dumfounded, I demanded an explanation, only to hear the horrible stories of cocaine abuse, painkillers and the experimentation of every other imaginable drug.

I told him he needed to do the right thing. It was the hardest and easiest decision I ever had to make. On our three-year wedding anniversary, my husband pleaded guilty to using cocaine on several occasions. He was sentenced to eight months confinement, forfeiture of pay and allowances, reduction to airman basic and a bad conduct discharge. My husband is a drug addict. His decisions and his disease ruined his life.

His disease touched everyone around him and wrapped its poisonous fingers around them. I was ruined; my children were ruined; our families were ruined; our friends were ruined and his Air Force career was ruined.

This experience and his actions left everyone hurt and betrayed. Our son, who is two years old, resorted to taking a picture of his daddy to bed with him at night in some hapless, desperate effort to be closer to his father. My daughter, who is five months old, will not even know the man who is supposed to be her father when he finally gets out of prison.

Now, a heart that is worn and weathered would know better than to fight, but I have decided to wear mine like a weapon. I vowed that this abuse, this addiction that afflicts my husband will NEVER touch my children again, or anyone else, for that matter, if I can help it.

After the court-martial, I was appalled to know that

there were many who knew of my husband's addictions. "Why," I pleaded, "didn't you say something? Why didn't you help him?" I kept getting the same answers. Some said they didn't want the conflict; others stated that it wasn't any of their business, and others said they didn't want to intrude on anybody's personal problems.

Those answers do not cut it. We are all members of the Air Force family. It is our responsibility as Air Force members to take a stand and help someone, even if doing the right thing hurts like hell.

If you know someone who has a problem with alcohol or prescription medications or drugs, please, I am begging and pleading with you, say something.

My husband is solely responsible for the crimes he committed. However, I cannot help but wonder how different the circumstances would have been if someone had taken a stand against his drug abuse. Perhaps he could have gotten help before everything spun out of control.

As I reflect on the recent events, the answers are all so simple: If you are abusing alcohol, prescription medications or illegal substances, you will eventually get caught and pay the price for your actions. You will be ripped from your family and placed in prison where you can't even walk through a doorway without asking permission.

There is also another answer: We are responsible for our fellow Airmen. You are the key to making the right choice and helping someone before it is too late. And it will be a hard choice to make; we all know that. But the rewards are limitless when you can proudly state that you helped make someone healthy and free of the strangling depths of drugs.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Joel Mease

Col. Michael Vidal (right), 20th Maintenance Group commander, tours the 20th Component Maintenance Squadron Tuesday where Senior Airman Gary Karlson shows him a program the squadron uses.

Team Shaw welcomes new MXG commander

Col. Michael Vidal brings more than 27 years maintenance experience to 20th Fighter Wing

By Airman 1st Class Joel Mease
Staff writer

In a change-of-command ceremony here recently, Col. Michael Vidal took command of the 20th Maintenance Group.

Col. Vidal, who has had more than 27 years of maintenance experience, was the F-16 system support manager and director at the Ogden Air Logistics Center, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, before taking command of the 20th MXG.

At the center, he helped manage the engineering, development, production, sustainment and deployment of more than 3,900 F-16 aircraft for the air forces of the United States and 24 foreign nations.

"Col. Vidal's maintenance experience is an extremely valuable asset to the 20th Fighter Wing," said Col. Philip Ruhlman, 20th FW commander.

While at Shaw, Col. Vidal said he wants the maintenance group to remain focused on the basics.

"This wing has a stellar record of maintenance excellence," said the Burlington, Vt. native.

The MXG commander and his wife, Joanne, have three children and eight grandchildren.

This is the second assignment to Shaw for the Vidal family. They were here from 1991 until 1993.

"This is by far the No. 1 choice for Joanne and I to go. It is always great to get

to go where you want to be assigned to," said the 20th MXG commander.

Since coming back, he said he has noticed a huge amount of growth in the Sumter and Shaw community.

"The Education Center, dining facility and new aircraft maintenance unit buildings really impressed me," said Col. Vidal.

Col. Vidal's advice to Airmen is to enjoy what you're doing and maintain your integrity by staying focused on the basics.

"Speak up when things aren't right. We need to hear from you," he added.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Josef Cole

Col. Philip Ruhlman (left) hands command of the 20th MXG to Col. Michael Vidal recently. This is Col. Vidal's second assignment to Shaw.